



PRESS RELEASE

African Union Commission Supports the Gabonese Government Towards the Establishment of National Commission for Small Arms and Light Weapons

Libreville, 4 November 2014: At the request by the Republic of Gabon, the African Union (AU) Commission supported a two-day National Forum on the Fight Against the Illicit Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Libreville, Gabon from 3-4 November 2014. The meeting was convened in partnership with the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

The meeting brought together senior government officials from various ministries, the military, police, and civil society. Also present were officials from the ECCAS Secretariat and the AU Commission.

The meeting was opened by General Jean Felix SOCKAT, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Gabon. In his statement, he highlighted the scourge of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which negatively impacts state and human security, and also retards national development. He thanked the AU Commission for the support towards the establishment of a national coordination mechanism for SALW for Gabon and pledged the commitment of the Government to work with the AU Commission and the ECCAS Secretariat to ensure the establishment and operationalization of the National Commission.

The statement delivered on behalf of the AU Commission, by Mr. Peter Otim, Expert in the Peace and Security Department, highlighted the important role in planning and coordination that is played by the National Commission on SALW.

The statement of ECCAS Secretariat was delivered by Colonel Jacques Didier MVOM, Expert on Defence and Security. He highlighted the importance of the National Commission on SALW and noted that it is provided for in the 'Central Africa Convention for the control of SALW, their ammunition and parts and components that can be used for their manufacture, repair or assembly' and that Gabon was taking a step in the right direction.

The meeting considered the practical steps towards the establishment of a National Commission on SALW for Gabon, and made proposals for the structure, composition, and mode of operation for the National Commission, in accordance with the guidelines developed by the General Secretariat of ECCAS. The meeting also agreed on the next steps towards its full operationalization and on concrete proposals for action by the Government of Gabon, the ECCAS Secretariat and the AU Commission.

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Peace and Security

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